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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News
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Navy and Marine Corps Medical News (MEDNEWS) is a weekly compendium of news and information contributed by commands throughout the Navy Medical department. Information contained in MEDNEWS stories is not necessarily endorsed by Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), nor should it be considered official Navy policy.

BUMED distributes MEDNEWS to Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian employees and retired Navy and Marine Corps families. Further distribution is highly encouraged.

Stories in MEDNEWS use these abbreviations after a Navy medical professional's name to show affiliation: MC - Medical Corps (physician); DC - Dental Corps; NC - Nurse Corps; MSC - Medical Service Corps (clinicians, researchers and administrative managers). Hospital Corpsmen (HM) and Dental Technician (DT) designators are placed in front of their names.

-USN-

Contents for this week's MEDNEWS:

- Naval Hospital Jacksonville aids lightning victims
- Nursing Symposium held aboard USNS MERCY
- USS WASP number one donor in the fleet
- Dental residency program graduates the finest
- 'Primary care manager by name' starts in Negishi
- Gap bridged between past and present amphibious operations
- TRICARE question and answer
- Anthrax question and answer
- Healthwatch: Autism - myths and realities

-USN-

Stories:

Headline: Naval Hospital Jacksonville aids lightning victims
From Naval Hospital Jacksonville Public Affairs

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - It's hard to consider yourself lucky if you get hit by lightning, but for three Sailors at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, the odds were stacked in their favor when they were struck by lightning June 27.

The three were on their way to their automobiles as a thunderstorm was fast approaching. As they reached their vehicles a bolt of lightning touched down striking all three.

Fortunately, Family Practice physician Lt. Cmdr. Steve

Blivin, MC, and his wife were in a nearby legal office building.

"We heard a loud crack of thunder. We commented on it, thinking that it must have hit the ground and ignored it," said Blivin. "Then I heard someone in the building say that the lightning had hit someone. I ran out into the parking lot where I found three Sailors that had been injured by the bolt of lightning."

One Sailor was not breathing and two suffered minor injuries.

"I went over to him, opened his airway and started mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. After a while he started breathing on his own and had a very weak pulse," said Blivin.

Several ambulances arrived on the scene within minutes. The paramedics quickly provided oxygen and a heart monitor on the seriously injured Sailor.

"When we got there, it was pretty chaotic -- people were everywhere. We responded immediately," said HN Jason Braswell, driver of the first ambulance to arrive on scene.

After checking on one of the other Sailors, Blivin returned to his original patient only to find that again he had no pulse.

"Thank God the ambulance crews were there because they had the right equipment we needed to get his pulse back," said Blivin.

"The second patient was conscious but wasn't really sure what had happened. We gave him oxygen because he was having difficulty breathing and transported him to the emergency room as fast as we could," said Braswell.

The NH Jacksonville emergency room team rose to the challenge of three lightning victims arriving simultaneously.

"These three injured Sailors could not have received better care in any medical facility, anywhere. We're all praying for a complete recovery for all three," said Naval Hospital Jacksonville Commanding Officer Capt. Barb Vernoski, MC.
-USN-

Headline: Nursing Symposium held aboard USNS MERCY
By JO2 Stacie Rose, Navy Compass Staff Writer

USNS MERCY (T-AH 19) hosted its first Operational Nursing Symposium recently sponsored by Naval Medical Center San Diego. About 130 people from Navy, Air Force, and Army nursing attended.

The theme of the conference was "Sharing successful practices in the Operational Arena." A total of 24 lectures on all aspects of operational nursing were conducted.

"Participants heard from a very talented group of speakers, passed stories and networked," said Cmdr. Karen McKinsey, head of the Nursing Department aboard USNS MERCY, and an event organizer.

As part of the symposium USNS MERCY called flight quarters and a SH-60F Seahawk helicopter landed on the flight deck to allow the symposium attendees to tour. On the pier, a hospital trauma tent was also on display for the attendees.

"The symposium was an overwhelming success, especially with the junior nurses and corpsman," said McKinsey. "This was a

good start and an excellent foundation to build on."

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Headline: USS WASP number one donor in the fleet

By JOSN Kevin D. Sullenberger

ABOARD USS WASP (LHD 1) - USS WASP broke a unique Navy record recently while participating in a significant humanitarian effort. The call to duty, during Mediterranean deployment 2000 however, was not assisting in relief efforts after a devastating earthquake, evacuating allied civilians from a hostile area, or fighting a fire at sea; it was a chance to perhaps save the lives of thousands of Americans who are diagnosed with leukemia or other fatal blood diseases.

During a two-day transit to Naples, Italy, Sailors and Marines formed a line in WASP's medical department to give a blood sample to the Bill Young Marrow Program, a Department of Defense program founded by Congressman Bill Young and managed by the Naval Medical Research Institute. The program collects blood samples and tissue types then DOD volunteers enter the potential lifesaving information into the National Marrow Donor Registry's database.

"We have a better turnout at commands that are underway," said Lt. Cindy Campbell, Commander Fleet Air Mediterranean's Bone Marrow Donor Drive Coordinator.

Campbell, the only service member in the Mediterranean qualified to run the drive, said that it's easier to get more participation from a command at sea because there is a higher concentration of personnel in one area and the medical facility on a ship is within walking distance. After running a two-minute television spot throughout the ship, distributing flyers on the mess decks, and making routine announcements on the ship's announcing system, volunteers appeared with their sleeves rolled up.

USS WASP topped the Navy record of 796 volunteers held by USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN 74). WASP also set the standard for amphibious ship participation by nearly doubling the 456 participants USS BATAAN (LHD 5) turned into the national database.

While the donors took time from their daily routine to pitch in, 25 dedicated corpsmen attached to USS WASP and 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (SOC) worked from morning to night drawing blood and filing donor registration.

In addition to its humanitarian role, the donor program gives the military the capability to provide immediate donor searches in the event of a mass casualty incident involving chemical or nuclear attacks where toxic agents can destroy bone marrow.

The blue-green team finished their drive with 866 donor entries, completing another successful mission for USS WASP's Mediterranean Deployment 2000.

"It was a life-saving effort," said WASP's Commanding Officer Capt. Hugh G. Story. "I appreciate the efforts of everyone involved."

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Headline: Dental residency program graduates the finest
By LCDR Dan Pacheco, MSC, Naval Dental Center, Great Lakes
GREAT LAKES, Ill. - Twenty-seven Navy dental officers recently completed an intense one-year residency training program at Naval Dental Center, Great Lakes. Disbursed among three separate program specialties (Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD), General Practice Residency (GPR), and General Dentistry Fellows (GDF)), these graduates received comprehensive, specialized training in support of fleet and operational force requirements.

The goal of the program is to prepare some of the best and brightest dental officers for operational assignments and isolated duty.

The AEGD residents focus on comprehensive dental training in the clinical setting, while the GPRs receive similar training in a hospital setting. Newly accessed lieutenants competed for a limited number of GDF training slots that offer mentored training in clinical skills in each specialty area of dentistry.

During a joint graduation ceremony with Naval Hospital Great Lakes, GPR residents, Capt. George H. Graf, commanding officer Naval Dental Center, Great Lakes, lauded the graduates as the future of Navy Medicine and dentistry.

"I challenge each of you to take with you the technical and professional aspects of this past year and use them to drive Navy Dentistry to higher levels of dental readiness and optimization of dental health," said Graf.

In her congratulatory remarks, Capt. Elaine C. Holmes, commanding officer, Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, added, "These high quality education programs are at the cornerstone of our readiness. You have prepared yourselves through hard work and dedication to function independently in some of the most exciting and challenging circumstances in which our Navy permits us to serve."

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Headline: 'Primary Care Manager By Name' starts in Negishi
By Bill Doughty, PAO, U. S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka

YOKOSUKA, Japan - U. S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka has refined its Primary Care services and teams with the start of Primary Care Manager By Name at Negishi Annex. Each patient is now being assigned to an individual health care provider.

"They've been doing the primary-care-manager-by-name in the States for a long time," said Lt. Cmdr. Dan Hunter, the new Negishi primary care manager. "It lets you know who you're going to see so you can put a face with a name."

According to 10-year Negishi resident Cynthia Palmer, wife of MA2 Kevin Palmer, this is the first time Negishi had a full Family Practice doctor here.

"This morning my treatment was excellent. All my concerns were answered and I just feel really great about our clinic right now," Ms. Palmer said.

"I guess the bottom line is, I care about my patients. Even from my last command I still think about my patients I knew for my 2 1/2 years there. So the patients I get to know I will

always remember. I want to do the best for them," Hunter said.

The Negishi community seems to be embracing the Primary Care Manager By Name concept.

"It's going to be a pleasure to have the same people to relate all your problems to on the same basis," said Palmer.

"Continuity is the foundation of medicine wherever you are," said Hunter.

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Headline: Gap bridged between past and present amphibious operations

By Jeff Brown, Editor the Great Lakes bulletin

GREAT LAKES, Ill. - Veteran Sailors of the Medical Evacuation and Troop Transport ship USS GOSPER (APA 170) learned about today's Navy Medicine as they gathered recently for their biannual reunion at the Chicago Sheraton.

They saw old friends and gained new knowledge about a Medical department that they helped to shape. Their ship was among the hundreds supporting the invasion of Okinawa, more than 50 years ago.

"The World War II veterans were the trendsetters with the deployment of the Landing Ship Tank as a medical platform and the use of ships like the USS GOSPER for medical evacuation," said Lt. Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, who spoke about the capabilities of amphibious warships today.

These service men and their historical actions influenced medical advancements such as use of the helicopter in medical evacuations.

The veterans were introduced to the types of medical support and the evolution of amphibious ships from 8,500 ton Landing Ship Transports to the 40,000 ton Landing Helicopter Docking Ships.

"They were fascinated with the level of care provided aboard a WASP-Class ship, with its six operating rooms and 540 bed overflow," said Aboul-Enein.

The GOSPER veterans were astounded to hear and proud to be a part of the foundation of medical evacuation options available to today's medical professionals at sea and preventive medicine efforts that are undertaken by ship's medical departments.

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TRICARE question and answer

Question: How do I switch from TRICARE Standard to Extra and vice-versa? Can I do this at any time?

Answer: As long as you are not enrolled in TRICARE Prime, you may switch between Standard and Extra at any time. You can switch by making the choice between any civilian doctor and a doctor within the Extra network.

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Anthrax question and answer

Question: Is there a requirement for long-term follow-up after the anthrax vaccine is administered?

Answer: No. Just like other FDA-licensed products, the

anthrax vaccine does not require follow-up monitoring of healthy vaccine recipients. Nonetheless, the DoD has already conducted such studies and is conducting more. No data collected to date shows any patterns of adverse events developing years after people have been vaccinated with anthrax vaccine or any other vaccine.

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Headline: Healthwatch: Autism -- myths and realities

By LCDR Mark C. Russell, MSC, Ph.D., Child Clinical Psychologist

YOKOSUKA, Japan - There appears to be a lot of mystique and misinformation surrounding autism, often perpetuated by the media and movies like "Rain Man" and "A House of Cards," and some outdated theories about its causes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are a group of life-long developmental conditions caused by an abnormality of the brain that affects as many as 1 in 500 individuals worldwide.

Over 500,000 people in the U.S. today have an ASD. Its prevalence rate makes ASD one of the most common developmental disabilities. It is characterized by problems with social interaction and communication skills and by the need for sameness or repetition in behavior. The three main types of ASD include autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, and Asperger's disorder.

There is a great deal of variability in functioning within a certain diagnosis so that an individual may have mild, moderate, or severe levels of a particular ASD. Therefore, no two individuals with an ASD are alike.

Some people with ASD are relatively high functioning, with speech and intelligence intact but others are mentally retarded, mute, or have serious language delays.

Most ASD begins at birth or within the first 2 1/2 years of life. Because of their difficulties in communicating and social interactions it hard for them to communicate with others and relate to the outside world. In some cases, aggressive and/or self-injurious behavior may be present.

In general, individuals with ASD are not threatening and do not pose a harm to others. Persons with autism may exhibit repeated body movements, unusual responses to people or attachments to objects, restricted range of interests, and resistance to changes in routines. Some also experience sensitivities in the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.

Probably the most fascinating and sensationalized feature of ASD popularized by films such as "Rain Man," are "autistic savant" skills, which are extraordinary abilities not exhibited by most persons. Approximately 10 percent of individuals with ASD have savant abilities; the most common forms involve mathematical calculations, memory feats, artistic abilities, and musical abilities.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the causes of ASD are poorly understood, although it is clear that

autism is a biological brain disorder. It is widely accepted that ASD is a complex combination of genetic and environmental factors that effect brain development.

There is no cure for ASD although some medication may relieve symptoms associated with the disorders. Research has consistently shown that early detection and intervention, especially before the age of 5 years, can play a critical role in the long-term prognosis or outcome for a child with an ASD.

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Comments about and ideas for MEDNEWS are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, at email: mednews@us.med.navy.mil; Telephone 202/762-3218, (DSN) 762, or fax 202/762-3224.

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